

Reply to Office Action of February 9, 2009

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 3, 9-11 and 17-30 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 3, 9, 17 and 25 are amended, and claims 1, 2, 4-8, 12-16, 31 and 32 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 3, 9, 17 and 25 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the appropriate base claims. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 3, 9, 17 and 25 do not raise new issues requiring further search and/or consideration. Withdrawal of the rejections and swift allowance are thus respectfully requested.

Entry of the amended claims is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (1) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (2) do not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration, since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution without incorporating additional subject matter; and/or (3) place the application in better form for appeal (if necessary). Entry is thus requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 3, 9-11 and 17-30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 3, 9, 17 and 25 have been rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of base claims 1, 4 and 16 as appropriate. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 3, 9, 17 and 25, as well as claims 10, 11, 18-24 and 26-30, which depend respectively therefrom, are in condition for allowance. It is further submitted that, as all of pending claims 3, 9-11 and 17-30 are in condition for allowance, the application should now be in condition for allowance.

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II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

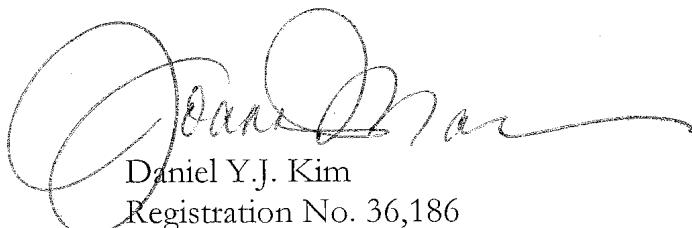
The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4-8, 12-16, 31 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,937,572 to Egan. Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 12-16, 31 and 32 have been cancelled, and thus this rejection is moot.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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